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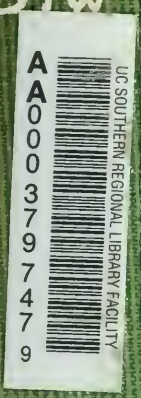

THE WOMAN WHO WENT TO HELL

DORA SIGERSON

(MRS. CLEMENT SHORTER)

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THE WOMAN WHO WENT
TO HELL

B.M.M.

THE WOMAN

WHO WENT

TO HELL

And Other Ballads and Lyrics

By DORA SIGERSON
(Mrs. CLEMENT SHORTER)

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THE WOMAN WHO WENT TO HELL

AN IRISH LEGEND

YOUNG Dermod stood by his mother's side,
And he spake right stern and cold:
"Now, why do you weep and wail," he said,
"And joy from my bride withhold?

"And why do you keen and cry," said he,
"So loud on my marriage day?
The wedding guests they all eager wait,
Still clad in their rich array.

"The priest is ready with book and stole,
And you do this grievous thing:
You keep me back from the altar rail—
My bride from her wedding ring."

His mother she rose, and she dried her tears,
She took him by his right hand—
"The cause," she said, "of my grief and pain
Too soon must you understand."

"Oh, one-and-twenty long years ago
I walked in your father's farm,
I broke a bough from a ripe peach-tree,
And carried it on my arm.

"My heart was light as a thistle-seed—
  I had but been wed a year—
I dreamt of a joy that would soon be mine—
  A babe in my arms so dear.

"There came to me there a stranger man,
  And these are the words he spake :
'The fruit you carry I fain would buy,
  I pray you my gold to take.'

"The fruit I carried he then did buy—
  You lying beneath my heart—
I tended to him the ripe peach-bough,
  He tore the gold branch apart.

"He whispered then in my frightened ear
  The name of the Evil One,
'And this have I bought to-day,' he said—
  The soul of your unborn son.

"'The fruit you carry, which I did buy,
  Will ripen before I claim ;
And when the bells for his wedding ring
  Again shall you hear my name.'"

Now Dermod rose from his mother's side,
  And all loud and long laughed he.
He bore her down to the wedding-guests,
  All sorrowful still was she.

THE WOMAN WHO WENT TO HELL

"Now, cry no more, sweet mother," he said,
  "For you are a doleful sight.
And who is there in the banquet-hall
  Can claim my soul to-night?"

Then one rose up from the wedding throng,
  But his face no man could see,
And he said, "Now bid your dear farewell,
  For your soul belongs to me."

Young Dermod stood like a stricken man,
  His mother she swooned away;
But his love ran quick to the stranger's side,
  And to him she this did say:—

"If you will let his young soul go free,
  I will serve you true and well,
For seven long years to be your slave
  In the bitterest place of hell."

"Seven long years, if you be my slave,
  I will let his soul go free."
The stranger drew her then by the hand,
  And into the night went he.

Seven long years did she serve him true
  By the blazing gates of hell,
And on every soul that entered in
  The tears of her sorrow fell.

THE WOMAN WHO WENT TO HELL

Seven long years did she keep the place,
  To open the doors accurst,
And every soul that her tear-drops knew—
  It would neither burn nor thirst.

And once she let in her father dear,
  And once her brother through,
Once came a friend she had loved full well,
  Oh, bitter it was to do!

On the last day of the seven long years
  She stood by her master's knee—
"A boon, a boon for the work well done
  I pray that you grant to me.

"A boon, a boon, that I carry forth
  What treasure my strength can bring.
"*That* you may do," said the Evil One,
  "And all for a little thing.

"All you can carry you may take forth
  By serving me seven years more."
Bitter she wept for the world and love,
  But took her sad place by the door.

Seven long years did she serve him well
  Until the last day was done,
And all the souls that she had let in,
  They clung to her one by one.

And all the souls that she had let through
  They clung to her dress and hair,
Until the burden that she brought forth
  Was heavy as she could bear.

The first who stopped her upon her way
  Was a maiden all fair to see,
And "Sister, your load is great," she said,
  "So give it, I pray, to me.

"Mary, I am, God sent me forth
  That you to your love might go,"
The woman she drew the maid's robe aside,
  And a cloven hoof did show.

"And I will not give it to you." she said,
  Quick grasping her burden tight;
And all the souls that surrounded her
  Clung closer in dire affright.

The next who stopped her upon her way
  Was an angel with sword aflame,
"The Lord has sent for your load," he said,
  "St. Michael it is my name."

The woman drew back his gown of white,
  And the cloven hoof did see.
"Oh, God, be with me to-night," she said,
  "For bitter my sorrows be.

"And I will not give it to you," said she,
  And wept full many a tear.
And all the souls that her burden made
  Cried out in desperate fear.

The third who met her upon her way
  Was a Man with face so fair :
She knelt her down at his wounded feet,
  And she laid her burden there.

"Oh I will give it to You," she said,
  And fell in a swoon so deep,
The flying souls and their cries of joy
  Did not waken her from her sleep.

Seven long days did her slumber last,
  And, Oh, but her dream was sweet,
She thought she wandered in God's far land,
  The bliss of her hopes complete.

And when she woke on the seventh day
  To her love's home did she go.
And there she met neither man nor maid
  Who ever her face did know.

And lo ! she saw set a wedding-feast,
  And tall by her own love's side
There leaned a maiden, all young and fair,
  Who never should be his bride.

"A drink, a drink, my little page boy,
  A drink I do pray you bring."
She took the goblet up in her hand,
  And dropped in her golden ring,

"He who would marry, my little page,
  I pray he may drink with me,
'To the old true love that he has forgot,'
  And this must his toasting be."

When her false lover had got the cup
  He drained it both deep and dry,
"To my dead love that I mourned so long,
  And I would that she now were nigh."

He took from the cup the golden ring,
  And he turned it in his hand.
He said, "Whoever has sent this charm
  I cannot her power withstand."

"Oh she is weary, and sad, and old,"
  The little page-boy replied.
But Dermod strode through the startled guests,
  And stood by his own love's side.

He took her up in his two strong arms,
  And "Have you come home?" he said,
"Twice seven long years I mourned you well
  As silent among the dead."

He kissed her twice on her faded cheek,
  And thrice on her snow-white hair.
"And this is my own true wife," he said
  To the guests who gathered there.

"Oh, she is withered and old," they cried,
  "And her hair is pale as snow.
'Twere better you took the fair young girl,
  And let the sad old love go."

"I will not marry the fair young girl,
  No woman I wed but this,
The sweet white rose of her cheek," said he,
  "Shall redden beneath my kiss."

"There is no beauty in all the land
  Who can with her face compare."
He led her up to the table head,
  And set her beside him there.

EARL RODERICK'S BRIDE

IT was the Black Earl Roderick
  Who rode towards the south ;
The frown was heavy on his brow,
  The sneer upon his mouth.

Behind him rode a hundred men
  All gay with plume and spear ;
But not a one did lilt a song
  His weary way to cheer.

So stern was Black Earl Roderick
  Upon his wedding day,
To none spoke he a single word
  Who met him on his way.

And when he reached the castle old,
  Wherein his bride did wait,
He blew three blasts upon the horn,
  That hung beside the gate.

"Now who be you who blow so strong,
  And all so gaily ride ?"
"It is the Black Earl Roderick
  Who comes to claim his bride."

"Come in, come in, Earl Roderick,
  Come in, or you be late;
The priest is ready in his stole,
  The wedding guests await."

And then the stern Earl Roderick
  From his fierce steed came down;
The sneer still curled upon his lip,
  His eyes still held the frown.

He strode right haughtily and quick
  Into the banquet hall,
And stood among the wedding guests,
  The greatest of them all.

He gave scant greeting to the throng,
  He waved the guests aside;
'Now haste, for I, Earl Roderick,
  Will wait long for no bride.

'And I must in the saddle be
  Before the night is grey;
So, quickly with the marriage lines,
  And let us ride away.'

While spoke the great Earl Roderick
  There came into the hall
His little bride, all trembling,
  As though she soon must fall.

EARL RODERICK'S BRIDE

Her mother held her snow-white hand
  And wept most bitterly ;
She whispered, 'If I had my will
  This thing should never be.'

Her father muttered in his beard,
  'Thus do the clans unite ;
Yet were there other way, I vow,
  This troth they should not plight.'

And when the two were wedded one,
  He raised his hand and said,
'This is the link that binds the clans ;
  God's blessing on her head.'

But now the stern Earl Roderick
  His presence did deny ;
He mounted on his fretting steed
  With but a scant good-bye.

His bride he set before him there,
  And rode upon his way,
And all his sullen men at arms
  With wedding favours gay.

And to his weary little bride
  He spoke no gentle word ;
She fluttered, weeping on his breast,
  Like to some wounded bird.

For in his heart the gloomy Earl
  Had spoke a bitter thing:
"Oh, 'tis not on your hand I love
  To see my golden ring.

"I, wedding thus the stranger child,
  Keep the clans united,
But set my own true love aside,
  Broke the troth I plighted."

. . . . . .

It chanced when Black Earl Roderick
  Had but been wed a year,
There came to him a serving-lass,
  Within her eye a tear.

"Alas," she said, "Earl Roderick,
  'Tis well that you should know
That each grey eve, lone wandering,
  My mistress dear doth go.

"She comes with sorrow in her eyes
  Home in the dawning light.
My Lord, she is too weak and young
  To travel in the night.'

Now stern grew Black Earl Roderick,
  But answered not at all;
He took his hunting harness down
  That hung upon the wall.

And quickly went he to the chase,
  And slowly came he back,
And there he met his old sweetheart,
  Who stood across his track.

And, "Oh, proud Earl Roderick,"
  She said, 'I bring to you
A tale to bow your haughty head—
  Your mistress is untrue.

"She goes alone each night, they say,
  And mounts Highbrasil hill,
And there she lingers with her love
  Until the dawn comes chill."

At this the stern Earl Roderick
  Grew paler than the dead,
And bowed upon his heaving breast
  His proud and angry head.

"Till now," he cried, "no stain has come
  Upon my honoured name.
Lord, pity me, that in my time
  Should rise the flush of shame."

He struck the gold spur in his steed,
  The wind behind him wailed;
He drove the beast through stream and briar
  Until its strength nigh failed.

And when he reached Highbrasil hill
  He searched it high and low,
But ne'er a sight of his lost bride
  Did all his seeking show.

But there he met an ancient crone,
  To whom he spake his mind—
"And have you seen my lady here,
  For her I cannot find?"

"I have not seen your lady here,"
  The withered dame replied;
"But I have met a little lass,
  Who wrung her hands and cried.

"She was not clad in silken robe,
  Nor rode a palfrey white;
She had no maidens in her train,
  Behind her rode no knight.

"But she crept weary up yon hill,
  And crouched upon the sord.
I dare not think that she could be
  Spouse to so great a Lord,"

Now darkly frowned Earl Roderick,
  He turned his face away;
And shame and anger in his heart
  Disturbed him with their sway,

For he had never cared to know
  What his young bride would wear;
He gave her neither horse, nor hound,
  Nor jewels for her hair.

"And whither went this little lass,
  And who was by her side?
I vow his blood shall drench my blade,
  And that before my bride,"

"There was no lover by her side;
  She went sad and alone,
And when she reached the green hilltop
She there would make her moan."

"And once her father's name she'd cry,
  And twice her mother's call,
And thrice on Black Earl Roderick
  Who loved her not at all.

"And every night she came and wept,
  So long upon the hill,
And watched the lights in her lost home
  Until the dawn grew chill,"

"What did you tell to her, old witch,
  When weeping she passed by?'
'I took her pretty hand in mine
  And bid her not to cry.

"I traced upon her slender palm
  That luck was changing soon;
I swore that peace would come to her
  Before another moon.

"I said that he who loved her well
  Would clad her all in silk,
And bear her in a coach of gold
  With palfreys white as milk.

"I told, before three suns had set
  He'd kneel down by her side,
That he she loved would love her well
  And she would be his bride."

Now pallid grew Earl Roderick;
  He turned his charger home;
Vowed in a tower he'd lock his bride,
  So she no more could roam.

But when he reached the castle grey
  He searched both high and low:
But none had seen his pale lady,
  And none had seen her go.

There came to him a serving-maid,
  And in her eye a tear:
'Oh, what has happened in the night?
  A banshee I did hear!'

EARL RODERICK'S BRIDE

There came to him his sister grey,
  And stern was her set face:
'A curse upon the wandering feet
  That bring our house disgrace!'

But still the proud Earl Roderick
  No answer did he make,
But locked his grief within his heart
  Until it seemed to break.

He went into his own chamber,
  And crouched within his chair,
And lo! when he did raise his head,
  Behold! his bride was there!

She stood beside the open door,
  Her sad eyes on his face;
But when he sprang to reach her side
  He found but empty space.

He mounted up the marble stair
  And went her chamber through,
And there he met a serving-lass
  With face of deathly hue:

"Oh, I have seen a white ghost walk,
  With dim eyes of the dead!
She wrung her hands most piteously
  And wept at your bed-head,"

EARL RODERICK'S BRIDE

All silent Black Earl Roderick
  Went to his room away,
All angry with his throbbing heart
  And fitful fancies play.

He sat him by the bright hearthside
  And turned towards the door ;
And there upon the threshold stood
  His lady, weeping sore.

He chased her down the winding stair
  And out into the night ;
But only found a withered crone,
  With long hair, loose and white.

'Come hither now, you sly-faced witch ;
  Come hither now to me.
Say, if a lady all so pale
  Your evil eyes did see ?'

'Oh, true, I saw a little lass,
  She went all white as snow ;
She crossed my hand with silver crown
  Just two short hours ago.'

'What did you tell the foolish wench—
  Who must my lady be ?
The false tale you did tell to her
  You now must tell to me.'

EARL RODERICK'S BRIDE

'I hate you, Black Earl Roderick
  You're cruel, hard, and cold ;
Yet shall you grieve like a young child
  Before the moon is old.

'This did I tell her : like a queen
  She'd ride into the town ;
And ev'ry man who met her there
  Would on his knees go down.

"I said that he who followed none
  Would walk behind her now,
And in his trembling hands the helm
  From his uncovered brow.

"And he should walk, while she would ride,
  Through all the town away ;
And greater than Earl Roderick
  She would become that day.'

Now scornful laughed Earl Roderick :
  "I vow this could not be ;
There is no lady in the land
  Could make a slave of me.

"There has no woman yet been born
  Who could more great become :
So get you hence, you foulsome hag,
  Your tale grows wearisome.'

EARL RODERICK'S BRIDE

And home went Black Earl Roderick,
  Right angry was he now;
He sat before the dying fire,
  A frown was on his brow.

He looked across the empty room,
  And once he saw again
His lady on the threshold stand,
  With face of grievous pain.

'Come here, come here, my sad-faced bride;
  Why do you come and go?
There is a question I musk ask,
  An answer I must know.'

Oh, stern was Black Earl Roderick,
  He called her by her name;
But from the threshold of the room
  She neither spoke nor came.

Now rose up Black Earl Roderick,
  And strode the chamber through,
And said, 'If you come not to me,
  I fain must come to you.'

He followed her down hall and stair,
  Out through the open door;
And every weary mile he went
  The lady was before.

EARL RODERICK'S BRIDE

Through sleepy woods and singing streams
  He followed through the night:
But never did he reach her side,
  Or stopped she from her flight.

Until she reached Highbrasil hill,
  And by Highbrasil lake,
And there she vanished from his eyes
  Ere he could overtake.

He looked into the deep wood green,
  But nothing there did see;
He looked into the still water,
  Beneath, all white, lay she.

He drew her from her cold, cold bed,
  And kissed her cheek and chin;
Loosed from his neck his silken cloak
  To wrap her body in.

He took her up in his two arms—
  His grief was deep and wild;
He knelt beside her on the sod
  And sorrowed like a child.

He blew three blasts upon his horn,
  His men did make reply,
And came all quickly to his call
  Through brake and briar so high.

They raised her up upon their shields,
  Clad in her cloak of silk ;
Home brought her in a coach of gold
  With palfreys white as milk.

And every man who saw her there
  Went down upon his knee ;
Behind her came Earl Roderick,
  All pitiful to see.

And in his trembling hands the helm
  From his uncovered brow ;
And 'Oh, he said, 'to love her well,
  And know it only now !'

And he did walk, while she did ride,
  Through all the town away ;
For greater then Earl Roderick
  She did become that day,

THE DEAN OF SANTIAGO:

A STORY IN VERSE

THE Dean of Santiago on his mule
Rode quick the Guadalquivir banks along,
He had no eye the veiling eve to love,
No ear to listen for the bird's late song.

Gold mist and purple of the setting sun,
Rose lapping wave and linnet's low good-night,
The crags that sat the hills like kings enthroned,
All heather-crowned, for him had no delight.

His roaming glances go from east to west,
Climb quick before him, find amid the rocks
A hut ; he hastens, casting free his mule,
And with no gentle hand the door he knocks.

'Now who would enter ?' 'I, the Dean, let pass.'
He sees the tenant working at his books,
'And what can I, a student, poor, remote,
Do for the Dean ?'—he answers to his looks.

Teach me your magic, so I learn to slave
The hiding creatures from the circling air
And bid them speak. Blow from the crystal globe
The mists that hold my future clouded there.'

'What? Share my magic! But it were not well:
  The Church such study doth denounce and shun.'
The Dean with some rebuke now makes reply,
  'My law I own in this—let it be done.'

'Then you must eat before the task is set:
  Well, when you finish; since you eager are,
We should begin. Nay, this I do insist,
  For you are weary, having travelled far.

'Hussein!'—he bids the servant by his side—
  'Go tell the cook a guest with me will dine;
And let two capons be prepared by him,
  And two gold cups of my most famous wine.'

'Tie up the straying mule. And now begone;
  The Dean within an hour will dine with me.'
The servant goes, and lets the curtain fall,
  And darkness folds the room in mystery.

Soft wings brush past the Dean, strange sounds float up,
  Like tongues that have no words, through the still air.
'What say you?' leans the Dean with eager ears
  And grasping hands that find no substance there.

'What are you?' But the magic mist is gone,
  Hussein has entered, and the light let through.
'A message for the Dean.' He reads in haste,
  '*The Bishop being dead, we send for you.*

THE DEAN OF SANTIAGO

The Dean arises full of pompous pride:
  'If I am bishop I shall not forget
My student-teacher, and shall bid you come
  To teach that lore I leave with much regret.'

. . . . . .

A month has passed—the Bishop in his room
  Receives the student bowing at his feet,
With some delight, and says he has prepared
  A secret chamber where they can repeat

Their former study, and so follow it.
  The student, smiling gratitude, doth speak,
'I beg a boon of you,' and hears reply,
  'I make a promise, and I never break.

'The boon is yours.' The student bows again:
  'I have a son, a gentle youth and good,
Who seeks the Church.' The Bishop lifts his eyes,
  'To him I hold the hand of brotherhood.'

'Soon I shall call him, but to-day my time
  Is thick with thought, because a rumour came
The great Archbishop at the door of Death
  Doth knock—the air is heavy with my name.'

. . . . . .

A year goes by, and the Archbishop wakes,
  Springs from his bed, and 'Hussein, you!' he cries,
To find strange eyes upon him. Bows the Moor,
  'My master waits your message,' he replies.

'Then bid him enter, take up his abode
  Within my Palace, wait until I come.
To-day my mind is busy with such things
  That bid me to all other thoughts be dumb,

'Go, tell your master, he will understand,
  The Cardinal is dying. What! His son
Begs for a hope! What better hope than this—
  The Cardinal is dying?—I have done.'

. . . . . .

The Cardinal upon his throne reclines,
  And at his feet the student, bowing low,
'A boon, my lord, a boon—let me be gone.
  Back to my solitude I fain would go.

'Here comes the world between me and my art,
  My soul is weary and my body ill,
My study broken, and my time misspent,
  You have forgotten what was once your will.'

'Nay, friend,' the other cries, 'you are unjust,
  My heart is with you, and I pray you stay
Until my mind breaks from the bonds of care
  That hold it now—a little more delay.

'Have you not heard the rumour that goes forth—
  The Pope is dying? Who shall fill his chair
When he has passed all sainted to the grave?
  Peace, friend, until the occupant is there.'

. . . . . .

The Pope within his chamber, deep in thought,
  Hears at his door a knock, and saying, 'Come,'
The student bends before him with reproach,
  'From all my knowledge you have picked no crumb.

'O Holiness! we had no feast of lore,
  But fortune came to you beneath my star,
Then let me go, since me you do not wish,
  Now you are greater than all others are.

'Old man,' the Pope replied, 'I let you go
  In pity of your age and fading hair,
Whom I should prison in my dungeon deep
  For all the evil magic you did dare

'Reveal to me, who only sought your side
  To find your wickedness and give it light.
Go back into your wilderness, but leave
  Your ways of darkness. Get you from my sight.'

'O Holiness,' the student bent and said,
  'My son for whom you promised of your aid ;
'Begone !' the Pope replied ; 'think not I should
  By son of you the Christian Church degrade.'

'I go, great Holiness, without a fee
  For all my time ; now but one boon I hold ;
To break my fast, I hunger as I go—
  Give me one meal, the way is long and cold.'

Now spake the Pope in anger, struck the bell,
  'I call my guards to put this beggar out.'
The door swings open, Hussein enters quick,
  'What, you again ?'—he rises in his doubt.

He gazes round, his palace slips away,
  A shadow-palace floating from his eyes.
'What ho ! my guards,' his voice falls into tears,
  He rubs his lids to rid them of surprise.

'Hussein,' the student smiles, 'go tell the cook
  One capon only, and one cup of wine,
And bring this ingrate's mule beside the door,
  The Dean of Santiago will not dine,'

THE BEGGAR MAID.

ALL on a golden morning the beggar maid did go
To gather branch and berry, the hazel-nut and sloe.
And as she went a-singing, a gipsy woman came
Beneath a bower of branches—a grey and withered dame.

'Your fortune, pretty lady, I pray you stop and hear,
I tell of one who loves you, of child you will hold dear.
Cross you my palm with silver, for in your hand I see
That gold shall lie full often, so pity give to me.'

The beggar child made answer in laughter low and gay,
'Alack, you have mistaken, good mother, hie away;
I am no high-born lady, my fortune soon is told.
I wed some roaming fellow who hath nor land nor gold.

'My son—if God should bless me—a-seeking too must go—
To gather branch and berry, the hazel-nut and sloe.'
Then spake the gipsy woman and took her brown young hand,
'Nay, you shall reign hereafter as queen of all the land.

'For see—the splendid future—that whispers of a throne—
And here the happy heart-line that owns one love alone.'
'Good mother,' said the maiden, 'that love make true to be,
And I resign the kingdom—yet never owned by me.'

'My daughter,' said the gipsy, 'he'll clothe you all in white,
And set you for your riding a palfrey black as night;
Upon your hair so yellow, a jewelled crown shall shine,
And gold shall be your wine cup and ruby red your wine.'

'My throne it is the mountain, my wine the running streams,
Such things as power and glory are only sweet in dreams;
Good mother,' said the maiden, 'I pray you let me go,
For I must gather brambles, the berry and the sloe.

'You meet me but with laughter, a beggar maid am I,
Who hath no greater kingdom than bird that wings the sky;
But like him I go singing who has no wealth to care:
None comes her way to envy whose treasure house is bare.'

And as she spoke a horn blast came ringing through the wood,
She raised her leafy burden—a timid moment stood.
'Hush, 'tis the King Cophetua, a-hunting he doth go—
And I must gather berries, the hazel-nut and sloe.'

THE MAN WHO TROD ON SLEEPING GRASS.

IN a field by Cahirconlish
  I stood on sleeping grass,
No cry I made to Heaven
  From my dumb lips would pass.

Three days, three nights I slumbered,
  And till I woke again
Those I have loved have sought me,
  And sorrowed all in vain.

My neighbours still upbraid me,
  And murmur as I pass,
"There goes a man enchanted,
  He trod on fairy grass."

My little ones around me
  They claim my old caress,
I push them roughly from me
  With hands that cannot bless.

My wife upon my shoulder
  A bitter tear lets fall,
I turn away in anger
  And love her not at all.

For like a man surrounded
  In some sun-haunted lane,
By countless wings that follow
  A grey and stinging chain.

Around my head for ever
  I hear small voices speak
In tongues I cannot follow,
  I know not what they seek.

I raise my hands to find them
  When autumn winds go by,
And see between my fingers
  A broken summer fly.

I raise my hands to hold them
  When winter days are near,
And clasp a falling snowflake
  That breaks into a tear.

And ever follows laughter
  That echoes through my heart,
From some delights forgotten
  Where once I had a part.

What love comes, half-remembered,
  In half-forgotten bliss ?
Who lay upon my bosom,
  And had no human kiss ?

MAN WHO TROD ON SLEEPING GRASS

Where is the land I loved in ?
  What music did I sing
That left my years enchanted
  Inside the fairy ring ?

I see my neighbours shudder,
  And whisper at I pass :
"Three nights the fairies stole him,
  He trod on sleeping grass."

TO CLARISSA.

CLARISSA, when you passed me by
With scornful lip and haughty eye,
My fault I did deplore,
Your anger, like a poisoned dart,
Struck death into my guilty heart,
I vowed to sin no more.

Clarissa, when you did forgive
And bid my fainting heart to live,
Nor killed me with disdain,
So soft your eye, so sweet your lip,
Where like a bee I hung to sip,
I fain would sin again.

THE MOUNTAIN MAID

HALF seated on a mossy crag,
  Half crouching in the heather ;
I found a little Irish maid,
  All in June's golden weather.

Like some fond hand that loved the child,
  The wind tossed back her tresses ;
The heath-bells touched her unclad feet,
  With shy and soft caresses.

A mountain linnet flung his song—
  Into the air around her ;
But all in vain the splendid hour,
  For deep in woe I found her,

"Ahone ! Ahone ! Ahone !" she wept,
  The tears fell fast and faster ;
I sat myself, beside her there,
  To hear of her disaster.

Like dew on roses down her cheek.
  The diamond drops were stealing ;
She laid her two brown hands in mine,
  Her trouble all revealing.

Alas ! Alas ! the tale she told,
  In Gaelic low and tender ;
A plague upon my Saxon tongue,
  I could not comprehend her.

THE WATCHER IN THE WOOD

DEEP in the wood's recesses cool
I see the fairy dancers glide,
In cloth of gold, in gown of green,
My lord and lady side by side.

But who has hung from leaf to leaf—
From flower to flower a silken twine,
A cloud of grey that holds the dew
In globes of clear enchanted wine ?

Or stretches far from branch to branch,
From thorn to thorn, in diamond rain,
Who caught the cup of crystal pure
And hung so fair the shining chain ?

'Tis death, the spider, in his net,
Who lures the dancers as they glide,
In cloth of gold, in gown of green,
My lord and lady side by side.

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